

# THE TRANSPORTATION LINK



Vol. 8 No. 4

April 2001



**From the Desk of  
the OSDBU**

**E**very spring we dedicate an edition of the Transportation Link to a topic that is very important to all of us - safety. The Department of Transportation's (DOT) strategic plan identifies safety as our top priority. We encourage all of our readers to take the time to plan how you can make safety an integral part of how you run your business.

Spring is a busy time of year for the small business community. There are many outreach events coming up, including the Economic Opportunity Forum in Corpus Christi, Texas that we are co-sponsoring. Small Business week will be celebrated May 6-12. We look forward to meeting many of you at these outreach events.

For those of you that we can't meet personally, please remember that we are dedicated to providing you with current information of interest on the OSDBU website at <http://osdbuweb.dot.gov> and with our News By E-Mail service that you can subscribe for at <http://osdbuweb.dot.gov/about/lists/lists.html>

SBA's HUBZone program is now offering a faster on-line application and there have been some rule changes in the program. You might want to research whether you can benefit from participating in this economic development program for distressed communities.

Share the *Transportation Link* with other coworkers in your office on-line! Readers can subscribe to receive e-mail notification when the *Transportation Link* is posted on the OSDBU web site every month at <http://osdbuweb.dot.gov/about/lists/lists.html> Color copies can be conveniently downloaded.

## ***Are You Putting Your Employees and Your Business at Risk?***

**D**o any of the following situations sound familiar?

- It's midnight and a team of your employees is frantically trying to finalize a proposal due the next day.
- To increase productivity, you have provided your employees with cell phones in their company vehicles.
- At the end of the day, you decide to meet with an employee to review their poor performance.
- One of your employees is putting in a long day on the road to meet a deadline.

These situations have the potential for disaster. Why? Because in each case, these individuals will not be at peak performance when they get behind the wheel of a vehicle, putting both them and your business at risk. As their employer, you maintain responsibility for the welfare of your employees by the policies and practices you choose to implement.

Last year, there were over 6 million motor vehicle crashes killing over 41,000 people, injuring another 3 million and costing this nation over \$150 billion. A motor vehicle crash occurs every 5 seconds and a person is killed every 13 minutes. Could one of these people have been in one of the above scenarios?

It gets worse. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of workplace death and injury. They cost employers over \$50 billion each year. That's a big impact on the bottom line.

What are the major contributors to the motor vehicle crash problem? Increasingly in the news, we hear about cases of drowsy driving, driver inattention and aggressive driving contributing to serious motor vehicle crashes on our highways. These news reports are for good reason, because these behaviors are major causes of motor vehicle crashes. As an employer, you can reduce the risk your employees face every time they get in the car - whether it is on or off the job.



**You're getting sleepy... very sleepy... you're asleep, but you're driving...**

**OSDBU**

Office of Small  
and Disadvantaged  
Business Utilization

wants to hear from you!! Call us toll-free at 1 800 532-1169 with questions or comments about this newsletter or our web site. The Transportation Link's content may be reprinted without permission.

*continued from page 1*

**Drowsy driving** causes more than 100,000 crashes each year, resulting in 40,000 injuries and 1,550 deaths. Sadly, these numbers represent only the tip of the iceberg since drowsy driving is seriously under-reported meaning that it is very likely that far more crashes can be attributed to drowsy driving.

What can you do to prevent drowsy driving among your employees?

- Discourage situations in which employees literally "burn the midnight oil."
- Educate employees about techniques to improve the quality and amount of sleep they get.
- If your employees have to work late into the night, provide alternate forms of transportation home and back to the office again the next day. Consider allowing employees some flexibility in their report time the next day, to ensure that they get adequate sleep.



**Driver inattention** contributes to 25 percent of all motor vehicle crashes. Inattention takes many forms, including use of communication devices such as cellular telephones, eating, radios, navigation devices, and simply having another occupant in the vehicle.

- Drive time is not work time or down time. Employees should be encouraged to make driving their only task while behind the wheel. They should be discouraged from using cell phones, eating and performing other non-driving tasks.
- Consider a company policy banning the use of cell phones while driving.
- Ensure that your employees have a time and place to perform other tasks such as eating and talking on the telephone.

**Aggressive driving** can take many forms - tailgating, speeding, frequent and unnecessary lane changes, and running red

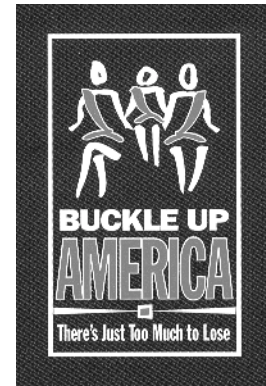
lights. Only five states have enacted aggressive driving laws, so traffic safety specialists do not have a measure of the number of crashes caused by aggressive driving behaviors. However surveys conducted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and by various other organizations show that aggressive driving is perceived as one of the greatest risk to safety by the motoring public.



#### What can you do?

- Establish and enforce standards of driving conduct for those employees who drive while on the job. Drivers who exhibit aggressive driving behaviors are not a good reflection on you or your business.
- Avoid confrontations with employees if you know they will be driving shortly. Allow employees time to cool off before they have to drive.
- Allow employees adequate time to travel between job sites to decrease the likelihood of speeding, running red lights, etc.
- Educate employees about how to react when they encounter an aggressive driver. The best defense is to not retaliate and if possible, move away from the other vehicle.

And finally, a word about **seat belts**. Wearing seat belts is the single most effective tool we have to reduce the risk of being injured in a motor vehicle crash. Even the best, most experienced drivers can become involved in a very serious crash. The best defense to a motor vehicle occupant, whether in the front or back seat is a seat belt.



#### What can you do?

- Establish and enforce a company policy requiring seat belt use among all vehicle occupants in all seating positions while traveling for business purposes - even if your employees use their private vehicles, taxis or rental cars.
- Remind employees that seat belt use is required in 49 states and the District of Columbia. So-called secondary laws don't mean a seat belt doesn't have to be worn.
- Provide incentives and awards to employees for seat belt use.



*For more information about motor vehicle safety, visit the U.S. Department of Transportation/ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration website at [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov). or contact Barbara Sauers at 202-366-0144 or [bsauers@nhtsa.dot.gov](mailto:bsauers@nhtsa.dot.gov)*

*For information about the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS), visit the NETS website at [www.trafficsafety.org](http://www.trafficsafety.org) or call 202-452-6004.*

# STAY ALERT for SAFETY!

## NATIONAL WORK ZONE SAFETY AWARENESS

**S**afety is a top priority at the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT). In April we highlight our commitment saving lives and preventing injuries through an ongoing commitment to Work Zone Safety. DOT's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), along with the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials and the American Traffic Safety Services Association, first established National Work Zone Safety Awareness Week in April 2000 with the development of a combined Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

This MOU created a partnership among states, industry, and the Federal Government, a partnership that is geared towards a common goal – saving lives, both worker's and driver's, on America's roadways.

The purpose of the Work Zone Safety Awareness initiative is to urge all motorists to take the basic steps towards accomplishing this goal. According to the FHWA, motorists can initiate safety in roadway work zones by not using cellular phones and by slowing down to the posted *safe* speed.

In recognition of Work Zone Safety Awareness, DOT asks all motorists to observe the following common sense safety rules when entering work zones:

- **STAY ALERT!**
- Pay Close Attention!
- Turn On Your Headlights!
- Don't Tailgate!
- Don't Speed!
- Keep Up With Traffic Flow!
- Don't Change Lanes!
- Minimize Distractions!
- Expect The Unexpected!
- Be Patient!



It is estimated that, as a driver, you will come upon a posted Work Zone every 50 miles – more in metropolitan areas. Orange signs along roadways indicate work zones. STAY ALERT – look for them!

Work Zones are a fact of life and are here to stay as DOT continues its efforts to ensure that our nation's roadways are continuously improved upon and made safer. By showing patience and utilizing sound judgment, we can reduce work zone accidents and ultimately save the lives of thousands of workers and drivers.

## TRUCKS AND BUSES

**S**imilarly, responsible driving is of paramount importance when sharing the roads with large trucks and buses. Known as the truck and bus "safety agency", DOT's Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has a primary mission to prevent commercial motor vehicle-related fatalities and injuries. FMCSA promotes motor carrier safety programs and educates the driving public on safety issues involved in sharing the road with trucks and buses.

Crashes involving large trucks and buses are a source of great concern to all people. These crashes result in approximately 5,000 deaths annually, or

12 percent of the more than 40,000 U.S. traffic fatalities. Studies have shown that a reduction in these types of crashes is possible if motorists are made aware of truck and bus limitations and are educated in proper driving methods when sharing the roads with these large vehicles. FMCA has set a strategic goal for a 50 percent reduction in all fatalities and injuries on our Nation's highways by the year 2010.



Whether talking about safety in America's work zones or sharing the roads with large trucks and buses, it is our responsibility as drivers to STAY ALERT and help make America's roadways safe for all!

*For more information on Work Zone Safety visit the Federal Highway Administration web site at <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/fourthlevel/nwzaw01.htm>*

*For more information on the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) visit their web site at <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/aboutus/aboutus.htm>*

**Federal Motor Carrier  
Safety Administration**





## Family Proves A Solid Foundation For Bonn-J Contracting, Inc.

**B**onnie Jean Rimel-Johnson, President and CEO of Bonn-J Contracting, Inc., spent twelve years in senior retail management before she started her own construction company in Florida. Her experience in scheduling, merchandising, and accounting is what gave her the solid foundation she needed to start her own business. In 1987, at the age of 41, she decided to leave behind the 18 stores she managed to build her own company, Bonn-J Contracting, Incorporated – a construction company specializing in Mechanically Stabilized Earth (MSE) Retaining Walls.

To fund her vision, Rimel-Johnson refinanced her home. She used the \$14,000 loan to purchase the supplies and equipment necessary to complete the jobs she was about to bid on. In the beginning, she did it all – estimation, bidding and supervision of all projects. Upon winning her first contract, family members became her first employees - Kyle Rimel (son), Field Supervisor; Tara Hubbard (daughter), Office Coordinator; and Steve Johnson (husband), Field Supervisor. With their hard work, perseverance, and dedication to making Bonn-J Contracting the best it could possibly be, Rimel-Johnson's family has proven to be the mainstay of her company.



Bonn-J Contracting is presently comprised of 25 full-time employees, all well versed in every aspect of the business. "Our employees are very versatile and skilled in every function of the construction business relating to our scope work," says Rimel-Johnson, "We pride ourselves on being able to send anyone to any job and receive the same high quality workmanship every time."

In their first fiscal year of incorporation, Bonn-J Contracting earned approximately \$50,000 in total revenues. In FY 2000, they grossed \$5.6 million and



Bonnie Jean Rimel-Johnson, President and CEO,  
Bonn-J Contracting, Inc.

for FY 2001, Rimel-Johnson projects a gross of over \$6,000,000 – a mark she once thought nearly unattainable. "It was extremely difficult to get started. Especially when we were funding the entire operation ourselves," states Rimel-Johnson, "We had to bid low just to get the chance at a good contract...that's how we made a name for ourselves."

Nearly 80% of Bonn-J Contracting's work is transportation-related including projects with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and individual state DOTs. While Bonn-J Contracting specializes in MSE Retaining Walls, they also provide detailed concrete and fencing services in support of their contracts. No matter what services they provide on a contract, Rimel-Johnson says, "It is doing quality work within the specified time-frame and budget that enables us to maintain long-term relationships with our clients."

Asked what her overall objective is for Bonn-J Contracting, Rimel-Johnson says, "One day, I want to be able to walk away and know that Bonn-J Contracting will survive and thrive on the existing market – in both the federal and commercial arenas." If the present is any inclination of what the future may hold, Bonn-J Contracting will not only survive, but prosper for years to come.

*For more information contact  
Bonnie Jean Rimel-Johnson (407)  
977-7666, email at bjrimel@aol.com*

## NEW GUIDANCE ON SETTING OVERALL DBE GOALS

**T**he Department of Transportation has posted a new guidance document, "Tips for Goal-Setting in the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program," on the OSDBU website. This guidance describes, in some detail, things that recipients should think about with respect to Step 1 and Step 2 of the goal setting process, as well as determining the appropriate race-neutral/race-conscious breakout of an overall goal. (Recipients are primarily state highway, transit and airport agencies.)

This new guidance document may be viewed at <http://osdbuweb.dot.gov/conferences/tips.html>

The General Counsel of the Department of Transportation has reviewed this document and approved it as consistent with the language and intent of 49 CFR Part 26. This document

therefore represents the institutional position of the Department of Transportation.



*You can learn more about the  
DOT DBE Program on the OSDBU web  
site at [http://osdbuweb.dot.gov/business/  
dbe/index.html](http://osdbuweb.dot.gov/business/dbe/index.html)*

## Texas Marketplace

**T**he State of Texas General Services Commission and the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) are holding an Economic Opportunity Forum in Corpus Christi, Texas on May 24.

*For further information,  
please contact Carla Coolman, at 800-  
532-1169 ext. 69886 or 202-366-9886  
or visit the OSDBU website at [http://  
osdbuweb.dot.gov/conferences/  
econopp.html](http://osdbuweb.dot.gov/conferences/econopp.html), for registration  
information.*

## National Small Business Week 2001, May 6 - 12

Small business owners will take the spotlight as the Small Business Administration (SBA) honors our nation's best with an awards ceremony to kick off this year's *National Small Business Week* in Washington, D.C. This year's theme of celebration, "A History of Success, A Millennium of Opportunity," encompasses the entrepreneurial spirit of these exceptional small business owners.

Award nominees and winners are chosen based on a wide variety of criteria including: financial success, staying power, employee growth, innovativeness, creative solutions, and involvement within their communities. These award winners represent a diverse cross-section of successful businesses in America in terms of gender, ethnicity, background, and types of business. The SBA is proud to honor these dedicated entrepreneurs for all of their hard work during this ceremony.

This year the SBA has taken major steps in reaffirming its commitment to the continued success of all small businesses by linking the 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Joint Industry / SBA Procurement Conference to this year's celebration. The



annual procurement conference will educate small business owners on how to get their fair share of the \$200 billion federal marketplace. It will also serve as the perfect contracting venue for small business owners to share their own experiences with each other and learn

about the vast opportunities that today's marketplace has to offer.

"This is an exciting time for entrepreneurs because not only are some of their peers being honored for their successes and dedication, they will also receive briefings and presentations on the most recent developments in federal procurement," said William Fisher, Acting Associate Deputy Administrator for Government Contracting.

Not only is it exciting for entrepreneurs, its exciting for all who benefit nationwide from the success of the small business community!

*For more information on Small Business Week, visit the SBA web site at <http://smallbusinesssuccess.sba.gov>*

## SBA's HubZone Economic Development Program Offers Faster On-line Application, New Rules

The U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) economic development initiative for distressed communities, the HUBZone Program, will mark its second year of operation with a brand new electronic application that is much faster than previous versions and more user-friendly. The HUBZone Program has been accepting applications for certification since March 1999 and the total number of certifications has just passed 2,700.

"At SBA, we've really put an emphasis on customer service and this is another step in that direction," said Acting Associate Deputy Administrator for Government Contracting, William Fisher. "This is part of our effort to streamline our programs and reduce paperwork so that the doors of economic opportunity will be open to all Americans."

This new application allows a user who has submitted an application, to check the status of his/her application at

any time during the review process. It also features a streamlined presentation with pop-up menus that help direct the applicant to an on-line guide and, if necessary, to the actual regulations.



The HUBZone Program is a powerful economic tool designed to open the federal marketplace to businesses in areas that are underrepresented. In FY 2000, this program has accounted for an estimated \$646 million in government contracts to certified small businesses.

In Oct. 2000, the SBA proposed amending the existing regulations governing the HUBZone Empowerment Contracting Program. The final rule implementing these changes appeared in the Federal Register on Jan. 18, 2001 and has taken effect as of Feb. 20, 2001.

The amendments will impact four areas:

1. List of participating agencies and clarification on applicability to state and local governments.
2. Definition of 'principal office'
3. Rules on affiliation
4. Procurement requirements for non-manufacturers

The Final Rule can be viewed in both HTML and PDF format at : <https://eweb1.sba.gov/hubzone/internet/general/whatsnew.cfm>

Current rules require that decisions on certifications be completed in 30 days. Paper applications, while still being accepted, will not move through the HUBZone review system as quickly as an electronic application.

## Retirement and Transitions

**R**ichard Dixon, the Small Business Specialist at the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA), has retired after 34 years of government service serving as a Small Business Specialist (SBS), Contracting Specialist, and Contracting Officer. He states that it was his "distinct pleasure to see small, minority and women-owned firms grow and participate in NHTSA's contract program."

Mr. Lamont Norwood will be the new SBS at NHTSA.

Debbie Ridgley, the SBS at the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), has transferred to become the Director of the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) at the Department of Health and Human Services.

Mr. Frank Waltos will be returning to the position of SBS, where he served several years ago.

Staff transitions within the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) have brought Mr. Darren Brown in as the new SBS there.

We wish the best to the small business specialists that we have worked with in the past and we welcome their replacements!

*You can access a complete listing of the Headquarters Small Business Specialists on the OSDBU web site at <http://osdbuweb.dot.gov/business/mp/contract18.html> or by calling the OSDBU at (800) 532-1169.*

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR April 2001

DATE	EVENT	CONTACT
April 23-25	Virginia Business Opportunity Fair 2001 Richmond Marriot Richmond, VA	(804) 780-2322 <a href="https://www.vrmsdc.org/html/vbofregistration.htm">https://www.vrmsdc.org/html/vbofregistration.htm</a>
April 24	11th Annual OSDBU Procurement Conference 2000 Upper Marlboro, MD	Janin Hardin (800) 878-2940 <a href="mailto:janin@fbcdh.com">janin@fbcdh.com</a> <a href="http://osdbuweb.dot.gov/conferences/osdbuconf.html">http://osdbuweb.dot.gov/conferences/osdbuconf.html</a>
May 1-2	FAA 4th West Coast Small Business Conference Fort Worth, TX	Tony Thomas (888) 268-6505 <a href="mailto:info@swr-conf.net">info@swr-conf.net</a> <a href="http://www.swr-conf.net">http://www.swr-conf.net</a>
May 2	2001 Greater Los Angeles Vendor Fair Los Angeles, CA	(800) 267-0106 <a href="http://www.mta.net/ebb/2001VendorFair.htm">http://www.mta.net/ebb/2001VendorFair.htm</a>
May 7-9	34th Annual Joint Industry SBA Procurement Conference Washington, D.C.	(888) 313-1535 <a href="http://smallbusiness.success.sba.gov">http://smallbusiness.success.sba.gov</a> <a href="mailto:sba2001@mac1988.com">sba2001@mac1988.com</a>
May 24	Economic Opportunity Forum Corpus Christi, TX	Carla Coolman (800) 532-1169 <a href="mailto:carla.coolman@ost.dot.gov">carla.coolman@ost.dot.gov</a> <a href="http://osdbuweb.dot.gov/conferences/econopp.html">http://osdbuweb.dot.gov/conferences/econopp.html</a>
May 30	Annual West Virginia Summit Morgantown, WV	Craig Hartzell (304) 292-3700

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Office of the Secretary of Transportation

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